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AUTHOR ALT, WESTON M.
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ABSTRACT

JUNIOR COLLEGE CAMPUSES SHOULD BE PLANNED WITH THEIR ACCESSIBILITY TO STUDENTS FOREMOST IN MIND. THEIR SIZE MAY INVOLVE ABOUT 150 ACRES. IT IS FALSE REASONING TO ASSUME THAT A SCHOOL DISTRICT WILL SAVE MONEY BY THE DELAY IN BECOMING PART OF A JUNIOR COLLEGE DISTRICT. COSTS PER ACRE ARE RISING SO RAPIDLY THAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS CANNOT AFFORD TO WAIT. (NI)

Brief No. 7, in a series on Aspects of the Junior College

By Weston M. Alt, Consultant
Bureau of Junior College Administration & Finance
Division of Higher Education
State Department of Education

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Junior College Campus Sites - How to Save Money

The location of junior college campuses should be planned without regard to existing junior college district boundary lines, or county lines, or high school lines, or unified district lines, or any other artificial barrier. They should be planned for accessibility to students.

Further, they should be of sufficient size to allow for a complete campus including all buildings, spaces between buildings, service areas, physical education facilities, with good traffic patterns, and away from industrial areas.

Now those are such simple statements that one wonders why they were mentioned. When one learns that such a site as has been mentioned may involve in the neighborhood of 150 acres, interest is aroused.

When one begins to think of how many suitable sites are left in some area under consideration, and the designs that real estate developers, and shopping and industrial magnates, have that same property, he begins to realize time is running out.

And when he gets down to the nitty-gritty of rising land value and compares the cost of "what could have been" five years ago, with the costs of "what might have been" today, with the costs of "what it is going to be when we get around to it" tomorrow, he is shocked and horrified.

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Let us consider a horrible example. Not here because it couldn't happen to us, but somewhere in California. Would you believe the Garden Grove Unified School District of Orange County?

Garden Grove used to be pastoral in nature. Now it is diversified and its schools had an overall daily attendance of 45,963 in 1964-65. It is surrounded on the north by North Orange County Junior College District, on the south and west by Orange Coast Junior College District, and on the south and west by Santa Ana Junior College District.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Now a district of its size could stand a junior college campus (not a district, just a campus). Suppose it became part of a junior college district at the earliest, say July 1, 1967. What about getting a site?

Recently, the Orange County Superintendent of Schools office was asked to get some facts and figures from reputable real estate people for the cost of a 150 acre site in the Garden Grove area. How do prices now stack up with a mere five years ago? What will they be five years hence. The answers are something to ponder a bit.

Ready? First, there is not that much acreage available in one piece except in the industrial area and competition is hot and heavy for that. Not only is that location an untenable one but you couldn't afford it.

Second, the last area of that size in the residential area went at $40,000 an acre. A neighboring area, Anaheim, bought a smaller acreage for a community center at $50,000 an acre.

Third, to buy a proper sized site now would require picking up as large a parcel as possible at $25,000 an acre and acquiring the rest by condemnation of property upon which houses have already been built. You guess what a jury would award a "little man whose homestead or birthright is taken by a big government Agency."

Five years ago several full-size sites were available at $18,000 an acre. It is conceivable that at least one might have been properly located and meet the criteria for good site utilization and planning.

Five years from now the going rate will be $30,000 an acre (minimum estimate) to $50,000 an acre (maximum estimate) depending on location. Plus added costs for condemnation, of course.

So the facts of life in Orange County are two: One, the good sites are all gone. Two, the people haven't saved any money by not buying then or now. Haven't they? "Sure we have, the money has not been spent," say some.

But let us take 150 acres at $18,000 an acre and 150 acres at $50,000 an acre, and include condemnation costs in those figures so as not to be picayunish. Cost five years ago, $2,700,000; cost now, $3,750,000; cost five years hence, $7,500,000.

Put it this way, for the same amount of money the area could have purchased 1½ sites for what it can today, or 2.8 sites for what it will do tomorrow. And remember, too, every dollar that goes into site purchase and improvement is one less dollar that goes into buildings, furniture and equipment, and teaching tools.

So the theory that we are saving money by not being in a junior college district may be fallacious in the long run. We'll pay double tomorrow for what we saved yesterday.

Remember this horrible example was in Orange County. It couldn't happen here-- land areas disappearing, subdividers active, shopping areas on the move, industry spreading out, values on the rise. But it just might happen here.